

## Hummingbird Magnets

Attracting hummingbirds to your garden is possible and easier than you think.

Hummingbirds, a.k.a. “hummers” that migrate to New Jersey are the Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*). They travel as long as 2,000 miles, which includes a 500-mile/20 hour non-stop flight over the Gulf of Mexico. Hummers are solitary migrators. They arrive in New Jersey in late April/early May and begin their migration south in late August/early September. Some juveniles may stay a bit longer.

Ruby-throated hummers are only 3 ½” long and weigh less than a nickel. They can hover and fly backwards! Both males and females have green shiny feathers on their backs, with males having a brilliant gorget (neck) of deep red.

Plant the following flowers in groupings to attract hummers to your yard:

- ❖ bee balm (*Monarda*)
- ❖ butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- ❖ cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- ❖ coral bells (*Heuchera sanguinea*)
- ❖ honeysuckle (*Lonicera*) (a favorite of ruby-throats)
- ❖ jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*)
- ❖ red columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- ❖ salvia (*Salvia*)
- ❖ trumpet creeper vine (*Campsis radicans*)

Place feeders in prominent areas to help attract hummers to your yard. Many types are available. Those that allow the birds to perch while they feed are good. For each location in your yard, purchase or make two feeders. This will enable you to easily swap feeders outside and avoid a mess indoors.

The nectar which hummingbirds love is made using a sugar/water ratio of 1:4. Make a large batch of 1 cup of sugar to 4 cups of warm water to store in the refrigerator for ease of regular refilling into your hummingbird feeder.

Regular cleaning is necessary to prevent mold and bacteria from forming. This could possibly get the birds sick and potentially make them avoid your feeders. You can clean the feeders easily by using a bottlebrush every 3–4 days. Happy bird watching!



## Checklist for April

### Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- ✓ Remove remaining winter protection from planting beds. See Rutgers Fact Sheet E271 “**Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance**” <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E271>
- ✓ Plant hardy vegetables such as cabbage, lettuce, radishes, and spinach. See Rutgers Fact Sheet “**Planning a Vegetable Garden**” FS129 <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs129/>
- ✓ Divide and transplant overcrowded perennials.
- ✓ Choose native plants when planning a new garden or renovating an existing garden. See Rutgers Fact Sheet FS1140 “**Incorporating Native Plants in Your Residential Landscape**” for details. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS1140>

### Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Prune rose bushes; fertilize and water, as needed. See Rutgers Fact Sheet FS1011 “**Landscaping to Create Backyard Bird Habitat**” <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS1011>
- ✓ Prune forsythia and other spring-flowering shrubs after blooming.
- ✓ Fertilize broadleaf and needled evergreens.

### Lawn

- ✓ Apply pre-emergent crabgrass controls when forsythia blooms. See Rutgers Fact Sheet E233 “**Crabgrass and Goosegrass Control in Cool Season Turfgrass**” <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/e233/>
- ✓ Apply slow-release nitrogen fertilizer at month end; see Rutgers Fact Sheet FS633 “**Fertilizing the Home Lawn**” for more information. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS633>